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| |  | | --- | | Each week, some of our Councillors and interns share a selection of articles, analytical pieces, videos and podcasts about what is happening in the world of international affairs. This week, our Councillors examine the situation in Afghanistan, the IPCC's latest climate report and China's military reach.  Disclaimer: The views expressed below by Councillors and interns are their own. The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales does not take policy positions. | |

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| |  | | --- | | A picture containing outdoor, car  Description automatically generated | | [Afghanistan: China’s Critical Jigsaw Piece](https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/afghanistan-chinas-critical-jigsaw-piece/) As the Taliban occupy Kabul, Prime Minister Ashraf Ghani flees and the US evacuate their embassy, I have re-read some recent articles that foresaw this tragedy and commented on some of its implications. I particularly recommend Claude Rakisits, writing in [**Australian Outlook**](https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/afghanistan-chinas-critical-jigsaw-piece/) about the Taliban's relations with the People's Republic of China; and the Whitlam Institute's t[**wo podcasts**](https://www.whitlam.org/publications/2021/8/11/the-future-of-australian-foreign-policy-toward-afghanistan-afghan-perspectives) involving Ahmad Shuja Amal, the Director of Afghanistan's National Security Council and Shaharzad Akbar, the Chair of Afghanistan's Human Rights Commission.  Image Credit: **[Sohaib Ghyasi](https://unsplash.com/@sohaibghyasi" \t "_blank)** | |

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| |  | | --- | | A picture containing outdoor, sky, sunset, clouds  Description automatically generated | | [**It’s the Planet, Stupid.**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LgswD4QveU)  The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its much-anticipated [**report**](https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1097362)on 9 August.  The warning that climate change is widespread and some trends are already irreversible made front page news in Australia and around the world.  Australia is lagging behind other nations in its response, but cannot avoid being forced by external circumstances to take some action eventually.  The European Union for instance announced its "Fit for 55" plan to reduce carbon emissions and reach zero by 2050.  Part of this plan is to impose a carbon border tax and this will impact global trade patterns, as is pointed out by the Editors of the East Asia Forum in their latest [**newsletter**](https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/08/09/europes-carbon-emissions-plan-risks-more-damage-to-global-trade-regime/).   Concerns about climate change are nothing new.  Readers may like to see a 2016 [**episode**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LgswD4QveU) of ABC TV's Clarke and Dawe titled "It's the Planet, Stupid" that is remarkably relevant today. Image credit: [**Matt Palmer**](https://unsplash.com/@mattpalmer) | |

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| |  | | --- | | The two articles above were contributed by Jocelyn Chey AM. Jocelyn is an Adjunct Professor at the Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, Visiting Professor at the University of Sydney and an Adjunct Professor at the Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture at Western Sydney University. She was previously a senior officer in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Jocelyn is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. | |

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| |  | | --- | | In addition to our Councillors, we invite our interns to share with you what they have found insightful or interesting in the world of international affairs over the past week. This week, our interns Cameron Smith and Isabel Freudenstein discuss the blow to US international credibility that the Taliban takeover of Kabul has caused and the overestimation of Russia's influence in the Mediterranean.  Disclaimer: The views expressed below by our interns are their own. The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales does not take policy positions. | |

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| |  | | --- | | This article was selected by Cameron Smith. Cameron is a recent Bachelor of Arts (Honours) graduate majoring in History and International Relations at the University of Wollongong. Currently, he is working as an Electorate Officer at the Parliament of Australia and is the Co-Founder and Chief Operations Officer of the Australia-Pacific Youth Dialogue. He has a particular interest in US foreign policy, international security, and grey-zone operations in the Indo-Pacific. | |

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| |  | | --- | | A military ship in the ocean  Description automatically generated with low confidence | | [****Russia's Economic Influence in the Mediterranean****](https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/07/21/less-than-full-deck-russia-s-economic-influence-in-mediterranean-pub-84973) Russia’s most important economic tools; energy resources, arms exports and laundering money through networks, have complemented their diplomatic and military activities in the Mediterranean. In this summary for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Joanna Pritchett explores how these have increased dependence on Russian money, oil and gas in the region. She highlights that this has been a powerful way of undermining the US and NATO’s influence for strategic gain within the Mediterranean.   However, when analysing traditional instruments of economic statecraft, Russia is behind. It has low bilateral trade with Mediterranean countries and low investment levels. It lacks traditional economic ties through development assistance. Pritchett argues that without these, Russia's economic influence in the region is primarily symbolic, lacking sustainability over the long term and that this will eventually undercut Russia’s political ambition in the region.  Image credit: [**PHAN David Carter**](https://nara.getarchive.net/media/the-russian-aircraft-carrier-admiral-kuznetsov-underway-in-the-mediterranean-02fff1) | |

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| |  | | --- | | * The ABC [**reveals**](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-04/north-korea-feeds-war-rations-to-the-poor/100347846) that North Korea is facing its ‘worst ever crisis’ during the pandemic, short about one million tonnes of food. * Yew Lun Tian from The Australian Financial Review [**discusses**](https://www.afr.com/world/asia/china-holds-assault-drills-near-taiwan-after-provocations-20210817-p58jkt) China’s assault drills conducted on Tuesday near Taiwan, as a response to what the country’s armed forces called ‘provocation’. * Bloomberg’s Maria Cervantes and Maria Elena Vizcaino [**analyse**](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-17/peru-s-foreign-affairs-minister-resigns-in-blow-to-castillo) the change in leadership after Hector Bejar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru resigned after local media published a video in which he blamed the Peruvian navy and the US CIA for terrorist atrocities. * Lynsey Addario in The Atlantic [**reflects**](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2021/08/the-talibans-return-is-awful-for-women-in-afghanistan/619765/) on the catastrophic future for women in Afghanistan, expressing the fear felt for the future of work and education of Afghani women following the takeover of Kabul. * Time Magazine’s Eileen Ng [**comments**](https://time.com/6090584/malaysias-prime-minister-resigns/) on the political crisis in Malaysia caused by the resignation of Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, against a backdrop of skyrocketing COVID-19 cases. | |

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| |  | | --- | | **Get involved!**  We're committed to keeping conversations about international affairs going, so get involved in our Letters to the Editor section!  Each week, we publish letters from our subscribers about what they think of the issues we’re discussing.  You can take part in the conversation by emailing us with your comments on each week’s articles. There are just a few simple guidelines: letters should be no more than 100 words in length, and should only be about the previous week’s articles. Please include your name and affiliation, and a mobile number (which won't be published). If you are a university student, please include your university and current degree.  Send all letters to the editors at [**aiianswletters@gmail.com**](mailto:aiianswletters@gmail.com) by Wednesday at 5pm Sydney time for the chance to be published in the following week's newsletter. | |

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